

CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2010
705 W. University Avenue, Council Auditorium

Commission members in attendance: Dale Bourgeois, Karen Carson, Bruce M Conque, George A. Lewis, Greg Manual, D. Keith Miller, Stephen J. Oats, Aaron Walker

Absent: Odon Bacque

Charter staff members in attendance: Vivian Neumann (Assistant City-Parish Attorney) and Veronica L. Williams (Charter Commission Clerk)

Council Members/Staff in attendance: Chair Jay Castille, Keith Patin, Council Clerk Norma Dugas

Administration staff in attendance: Director of Lafayette Utilities System Terry Huval

(5:30 p.m.) AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Call to order
Chair George Lewis called the meeting to order.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
Commissioner Dale Bourgeois was called upon to deliver the invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Comments/Announcements from Commission Members
There were no comments and/or announcements.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Review of Officers
Lewis reminded that it was determined at the beginning of the Commission meetings that officers were elected for a two (2) month period; thus, he had placed a “*review of officers*” on the agenda for consideration. A motion was offered by Oats and seconded by Carson to re-elect Lewis as Chair for a two (2) month period. Upon vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Recognize Area Mayors:

- Mayor Charles Langlinais (City of Broussard) – noted that he had previously forwarded information with a case history on improvements and the growth of the Albertson’s Parkway. He advised that pre-consolidation, the small municipalities did not agree to be a part of total consolidation. Since this time, the City of Lafayette had not annexed many areas, while the small cities have grown. Langlinais stated that he was not a proponent or opponent on whether Lafayette Parish should remain Consolidated.

On annexation matters, he suggested that a plan be developed to divide up the unincorporated parish and identify it with a municipality for future annexation purposes. Thereafter, a deadline would be set (for example 2015) for these areas to incorporate into a municipality. After the deadline, the areas which have not been incorporated would automatically be annexed into the City of Lafayette.

In his opinion, there was no support for true consolidation because the small towns felt they would lose their identities. He was working on a referendum for a district wide sales tax for road improvements. Further, the school board would also be bringing forth a referendum. The formation of the Charter Commission by the

Council was wise. Conque noted that he felt the consolidated governmental functions were successful and questioned how parish government would be able to support the cost of the administrative functions of government, if the parish had to live exclusively on funding received from property taxes.

Manuel asked that the mayor elaborate more on the proposal for a dedicated tax and Langlinais responded that the number one problem throughout the parish was the condition of roads. If this issue was addressed, so would the frustration. Manuel then asked why there was resistance from the small municipalities on joining consolidation and Langlinais responded that a citizen of an area municipality would be more inclined to have someone represent them on a smaller level. Broussard residents were paying parish taxes and he felt were not getting anything for it.

Walker asked why the original Charter Commission allowed the small towns to keep their autonomy. Conque stated that legislation prohibited the inclusion of other municipalities at that time. Oats asked for more input on the annexation plan and Langlinais responded that eventually there would be no more rural or unincorporated portions in Lafayette Parish if the plan was put in place. Bourgeois asked how long would it take for the City of Broussard to provide services to newly annexed areas under the plan and Langlinais responded that it depended on several factors; however, he estimated that it would take five (5) or six (6) years.

Lewis asked how Langlinais would feel if he had no city representative, similar to that of City of Lafayette residents and Langlinais stated that he would prefer to have local representation. Referring to Langlinais' annexation plan, Carson asked if the City of Lafayette would eventually have its own government and Langlinais responded affirmatively.

- Mayor Glenn Brasseaux (City of Carencro) – had been a part of Carencro's government for the last 24 years. It was his experience that rural residents wanted to live in the country (rural) areas as they felt they did not have to comply with all the rules and regulations that were imposed on City residents. Carencro grew as a result of the fear that residents could be annexed into the City of Lafayette, which had restrictions.

It was his opinion that smaller governments handled issues a lot more efficiently than LCG could. The bigger the government, the more red tape a citizen had to go through to get something done. In the area municipalities, residents felt that they could walk into an office and meet with their mayor, which they did not feel when dealing with larger governments.

There were areas that had been annexed for ten (10) years in Carencro that still did not have water/sewer service. The bottom line: people needed to vote to approve taxes to support improvements and services. Areas that needed support were Parks/Recreation and the Volunteer Fire Departments. The mayor then listed the services that LCG provided and/or assisted the City with through cost sharing and intergovernmental agreements.

Manuel reiterated Brasseaux's statement that residents were hesitant to annex into the City of Lafayette due to Zoning regulations and other restrictions and noted that Carencro had recently adopted its own landuse ordinance. Brasseaux explained that the Carencro plan was more of a performance land use and was a way of letting property owners know "*how*" to do something.

- Mayor Wilson Viator (City of Youngsville) – did not attend.

- Mayor-elect of Scott, Purvis Morrison, attended in the absence of Scott Mayor Hazel Myers, who was unable to attend due to an illness in the family. Morrison was also a member of the City-Parish Council, which represented portions of the Scott area and had been a resident of Scott his entire life. With reference to annexations, Morrison noted that the cost to place infrastructure into the unincorporated parish for such services as water and sewer was enormous. It was all about the money. With the younger generation coming to inherit a lot of the rural properties and the mentality being different, LCG could begin to bring structure and rules to the unincorporated parish. Additionally, there were many joint agreements to coordinate services in the parish. The funding for the parish was \$16 million, an amount that could not sustain the needs of the parish.

Oats stated that residents of the City of Scott would not want to give up their mayor and Council and asked Morrison's input on the comment that City of Lafayette residents have lost their full time advocate. Morrison responded that as a sitting Council member, he felt that there was a focus on City of Lafayette matters, in that a majority of ordinances the Council considered were related to City business. Carson reminded that residents of the unincorporated parish were also unable to contact a representative solely dedicated to the interest of citizens of the unincorporated parish. Morrison asked for clarification on Conque's statement that the Commission had the ability to include the small municipalities in their deliberations. Conque clarified that the previous Charter Commission could not include the small municipalities in Consolidation, unless the area municipalities wanted to "*opt-in*"; however, the sitting Commission did not have limitations.

- Mayor Susie Lagneaux (Town of Duson) – did not attend.

Lewis thanked the mayors for attending the meeting and for providing valuable input to the Commissioners.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Comments from Organizations on Consolidation
There were no comments from organizations.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: General comments from the public on Consolidation

- Mike Stagg stated that the City of Lafayette did not get to elect its own Council; and the main issue was about the fundamental rights of the citizens to elect their own government. No structure was put in place to allow the City of Lafayette go continue to grow. With the demographic shifts, LUS could be taken away from the City of Lafayette under the current Consolidation structure. Lafayette needed to be able to focus on its own interests. Stagg felt that he should have the same rights as residents in the area municipalities and recommended that consolidation be an "*all or nothing*" structure, with all the small towns going away or the elected body for the City of Lafayette being restored.

- Nancy Mounce felt she did not have the opportunity to vote for a city representative that will represent her interest. On the question previously asked on why the small municipalities were excluded from consolidation, Mounce stated that consolidation had previously failed and to get the measure to pass, legislation was adopted to exclude the small municipalities. Referring to Morrison's earlier comment that most of the Council business dealt with City of Lafayette matters, she responded that his statement supported the fact that residents of the City needed an independent Council. In closing, Mounce noted that a tax on businesses in the City of Lafayette brought in a major source of revenue, as was being done in Broussard.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Input on Charter Commission deliberations

Lewis requested that the Commissioners provide input via email to the Chair by October 8 on suggestions for

deliberations on Charter changes. A review of the Charter may be, for example, looked at page-by-page noting changes as the Commission goes along; by department, by sections, etc. Lewis reiterated that suggestions should be sent to the Chair with a copy to the Clerk by Friday, October 8, 2010 at noon.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Information on recommended amendments/changes to the Charter

Included in the meeting folders was a packet of information on recommended Charter changes/amendments from elected officials, departmental directors and citizens that have come before the Commission. The packet was for review in anticipation of deliberations. Also included was a memo from Lewis with an attachment identifying Consolidation/Governance options. The options were not limited to the six options presented...and more options were encouraged. Commissioner Conque was scheduled to brief the Commission on the "Jacksonville" model. Lewis felt it was important that the Commission first consider the governance structure for the Lafayette government. Once that was decided, the Commission could move forward with addressing other suggested changes.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: Next meeting date

The next meeting was scheduled for October 11 to hear presentations from:

- Greg Davis – former 2010 Charter Committee Member and Chairman will speak about the Committee's decision to deconsolidate.
- Ed Abell – former pre-consolidation 1991 Charter Commission Chairman.
- Bruce Conque – current Commissioner who will provide information on the Jacksonville Consolidation model.
- General discussion from Commissioners regarding current charter and possible changes thereto.

Oats asked that the Legal Department give a presentation to the Commission on its operation. Lewis stated that it would be scheduled.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11: Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.